

10th Anniversary! **Sketch**

working arts for street involved + homeless youth

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Proposed Ban on Panhandling an interview with Spewky McAllister by Phyllis Novak

What do you think about the proposal to ban panhandling in Toronto?

Completely ridiculous to ban panhandling. Why does it bother people so horribly? So long as you're not being aggressive about it. People have the choice to give or not, and people should have the right to ask for help.

What do you think this ban is really about?

I think it's about hiding homelessness and poverty from the public, trying to get it out of people's eyes and push it away instead of dealing with us as people.

Why don't people want to deal with the homeless "as people?"

Citizens who want this (the ban) to happen are generally misinformed and have not had the chance to really know or hang out with someone in that situation. They've been taught that we're all dangerous or something. That they can't interact with us and we're like a different species instead of just people. People in different classes are all segregated.

Can you say more about that segregation?

I think people in "higher" positions like government or CEO's of big corporations like the feeling of being in control and want to keep it that way. Being the exact opposite to that, they just want to hide us from the public who aspire to that "higher up" way of living. Keep people from seeing that there are dif-



ferent things you can aspire to. You can live a different way. You don't have to live by the ideas of what you're told success is. I feel successful if I've had a good day, when I write a song, when fifty people show up to my band's \$2 show. As long as you're doing what you enjoy doing and you're making people happy, that's enough for me.

It's got nothing to do with how much money I'm making. It has to do with how much of an impact I'm making in my community. Success like that is much easier to achieve than big money. It's more gratifying. Fifty years from now I may have a big house and money but I'll think, "shit, did I spend all my days sitting in an office at the computer and just suck up to who has more power than me and did I just become who they want me to be?"

Do you think the ban is motivated by this ideology, by money?

Yes. Totally. People at the top want people who follow them and do stuff for them. Instead of doing what makes them happy.

The ban is supposed to address community safety. What are your thoughts on that?

I'm no more dangerous than a lawyer or a doctor. My mom told me a story about a doctor asking people in her medical office "if you could kill someone, how would you do it?" After that he killed his wife the way that someone had suggested. I may not have money but I haven't killed anybody.

Any more comments on safe streets in Toronto?

Well, there's always the cops. There's a fear of street people instilled in people that's totally irrational but I can't count how many of my friends have been beat up for panning and just trying to live. And that's by people we expect to protect citizens.

I don't know when homeless people stopped being recognized as citizens but I'm pretty sure they (the cops) are supposed to be here to protect us as well.

Spewky is a community activist who has recently worked at SKETCH on the West Wall Construction Project. Phyllis is the Artistic Director of SKETCH.

2007 Upcoming Events

**Blundstone's BOOT IT UP
a benefit for SKETCH**

Thursday, Sept 27th. The Steamwhistle Roundhouse

10TH ANNIVERSARY FEAST

Sunday, Nov 26th

"This is My House" The SKETCH Doc

A 22 minute documentary, the result of seven months of work at SKETCH. It's a great instigator promoting the arts and culture as both practical and innovative ways to address homelessness and poverty.

The DVD comes with some information and a list of questions to help debrief what you've seen. We'd like to encourage the viewing of this documentary in living rooms, board rooms, class rooms and lunch rooms. Witnessing the creativity of folks who experience homelessness completely challenges our ideas of who they are.

Join the conversation! Check out the website to keep posted on when the DVD is available for purchase and for screenings. Should be out by June!



Driven By Irish

*Driving on the wrong side of the road
with no exact place to go
Just trying to save my Soul
Before I explode and Release it
into the air,
Into this world, where the playing field isn't fair
Where Compassion is Rare
And its increasingly hard to share.
To get your thoughts and feelings out there
On the Table
To express yourself, to show that you're able, and capable
to succeed on life's terms
As in the past all the bridges you've crossed burned
behind you, as you took that turn
from learned behaviours, to pure knowledge.
To accomplish feats, that used to bother thee,
by getting down on your knees
and praying to thy higher power
No Matter the time of the hour.
Because without Guidance
your life is sour, you're showered
with Pain and Grief
But there is relief, you just got to believe.*

Longboards & Lullabies by Rebecca Houston

The Wednesday Skill Building workshops were rocked in March by Longboard Building. Volunteer Brandon Steele and friends taught 8 eager folk how to make their own skateboards, designed for urban travel and maximum artfulness with original painting, drawing and screen printing on the bottom. "Longboard construction is like creating a moving canvas of self expression. This is an opportunity for a group to create themselves a life changing utility that they will be proud of. The positive externalities are endless," said Steele. "My longboard is sexy," said a workshop participant who has not been seen without his board since it was completed. Another participant tells me "I can get around town so fast now! Building the board was an awesome learning experience. I really think it has improved my life."

The new sound recording studio is hoppin' and poppin' with creative growth. Under the leadership of artist Michael O'Connell, a solid slate of 25 singers, songwriters and rappers have been putting down tracks - some working on whole albums, some just singing their hearts out for the great emotional release that comes from belting out a favourite song. An exciting compilation of new work was put together for the first 3 months of the year. Some of the artists are planning a listening party for this summer to share their work with the community, and one is planning a live show at SKETCH. The biggest challenge the music recording program faces is keeping up with the tremendous demand for recording time. Watch for music at SKETCH to grow and grow and grow and.....



Art and Garden by Sue Cohen

SKETCH has begun a new project in coalition with three partnering agencies: **Evergreen** is an innovative charity that explores the relationship between nature, culture and community in urban space, **from the ground up** is a youth employment and community economic development project, where youth work through developing community gardens to develop their own leadership and employability skills and **Ecuhomes** a rent-geared to income supportive housing provider with several properties in the Parkdale area.

In this project there will be opportunity for a variety of gardening experiences, artful design of public spaces and wild crafting, all with food education and sustainable living practices in mind, as well as exploring how to "green up" SKETCH....spring has sprung!



We are creating our own small container gardens in the studio, for growing herbs and lettuce for the SKETCH community kitchen. *the SKETCH Garden Collective...*

- Community working together to create beautiful spaces and good food
- Growth- sharing- knowledge- pathways to other things- built with love
- Care for each other, ourselves and the community

SKETCH VENDING
on Queen st. this summer!



come find us on a sunny
weekend - between Soho + Spadina.

"When you come right down to it, the arts are what really count in any culture. Any history of humankind will be basically a review of art and cultural activities. Battles and economics come and go but arts give the flavour to life. The arts help us to appreciate and savour the world that surrounds us, including the world of nature. Without appreciation and gratitude, life becomes pointless."

– Robert M. Bateman, noted Canadian wildlife artist

Ryerson Mural Project by Sue Cohen



SKETCH will be exhibiting a mural on wood at Ryerson University soon.

A crew of 4 artists, Francesca Nocera, Hamid Eshetar, Garry Wood, and Sue Cohen worked on the mural entitled "Community from the Roots Up" and this is our Image description and write up:

"People reaching through the roots of a great tree, following up into the branches, growing towards the sun, together. This is community, to be connected to each other while still celebrating diversity. Another tree is growing out of the spirit of a woman who represents creation. Soaring within the branches are birds offering wings to spirit."

SKETCH Featured Artist: Tanya



"I have lots of everything to sell."

This past January, SKETCH hired Tanya to design, build, and decorate the West Wall cabinets. She painted one of the more visually striking cabinets: it is often referred to as the 'splatter paint cabinet.'

Tanya began painting when she was a little kid, and has recently been working on a collection that she describes as colourful, abstract and swirly. Within the past month she has sold several pieces to Lindt Chocolates and the Ontario Provincial Police.

Tanya has been involved in many different mediums at SKETCH including photography, sewing clothes for humans and dogs, gardening, and jewelry making, and hopes to facilitate jewelry making workshops in the future. She is an active vender at Queen and Peter streets selling handmade hemp & bead jewelry with her big black dog Otis.

If you are interested in viewing any of Tanya's jewelry, t-shirts, paintings, textile designs, or photography, please contact Heather at 416-516-1559 x27, or you may be able to find her at Peter and Queen.



The West Wall By Kerry Boileau

In January we began an exciting project. We called it the West Wall. Its purpose was to engage youth in renovations



to improve storage capacity here at SKETCH. And, of course, to have a great time while learning all kinds of new skills.

We hired Contractor/Facilitator extraordinaire, Jordan Estall and five participants. Well over twenty enthusiastic SKETCH participants applied for the positions. Big shout out to all the beautiful people who applied!

The project got off to a rollicking start with people showing up consistently at 9:00 am and creating the exterior carcasses for ten moveable cabinets in the first week. As well as being functional as storage for supplies, the units also serve as set pieces for performances and as display surfaces for artwork. The youth designed and built the interior of the cabinets based on their intimate knowledge of our art supplies and how materials are used.



It was so fun to be involved and watch people problem solve, pouring over their drawings, measuring paint containers and all

the other wonderful and wooly things we have around here. We also installed a giant shelf nine feet off the floor and running the whole length of the Studio...44 feet! So cool!

Everyone had such a good time on this endeavor. Jordan was thrilled that five folks, (so resistant to anything that even smelled a little like math), eventually began willingly measuring in fractions of an inch...32nds of an inch - a Fraction Triumph! Youth described Jordan as flexible and understanding, saying "If every boss was like Jordan, then maybe these homeless youth would have jobs."

Participants found the experience inspiring. They said that being here early in the morning, working with amazing people on a job they enjoyed and getting a paycheck on top of all that was really motivating. "It makes us want to get other jobs."

SKETCH from Coast to Coast to Coast: Vancouver, Whitehorse, Halifax by Phyllis Novak

In January SKETCH was invited to Whitehorse to perform a theatre piece and conduct workshops with Yukon youth at BYTE's annual Youth Conference, (BYTE stands for Bringing Youth Toward Equality). It was a great experience for those who went (eight folks made up of SKETCH participants, staff and Community Artists) to see the north and host creative discussions and workshops about art making and homelessness. We learned a lot about

how homelessness effects many diverse communities in equally diverse ways.

We spent precious time with one another and some incredible people in the north. Special thanks to BYTE for hosting us and the learning experience. Also to Russell, Mark and Brook Kelly, Vicky Durrant and the Blue Feather, Joyce Majiski, Harreson Tanner and Julie Robinson from the Yukon Association for Community Living for hosting screenings, touring and inspiring us with your beautiful city and its surroundings.

Prior to that a stopover in Vancouver connected us with new art makers, and partnering groups hosted screenings of our documentary at The RoundHouse Community Arts Centre. Beautiful conversations happened. We are grateful to Jil Weaving from the Roundhouse, Alana McClennan, Michelle and Debbie for western hospitality and a sweet visit to the beach.

Then we flipped over to the east coast in February at the invitation of

the Community Action on Homelessness in Halifax to screen our documentary at the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Community Services, Phoenix Youth Services and at the Ark. Thanks to Darcy Harvey for your super fine coordination of the venture, to Dale Sheppard, Jesse Harrod, Dorothy and Emily for inspiring conspiring and taking us to the ocean.

Why are we doing this? We want to share SKETCH and instigate a revolution in Canada. That's all really.

SKETCH CLASSIFIEDS

Have you ever thought about commissioning a SKETCH participant for a special project or event?

DUSTY – He is a meticulous silk screener and can print clothing with your customized designs.

He can design and build customized long boards.

VICTORIA – She can sew customized dog jackets.

She is a talented digital photographer and is currently studying at George Brown.

RAYMOND – He graduated from Seneca's Graphic Design program this year. To check out examples of his work visit www.erdesign.ca

He has been involved in several mural projects across Toronto, and

could custom design a mural for your wall.

ELLE – She has studied photography at Ryerson and facilitates dark room workshops at SKETCH. She is skilled in manual photography.

She is a talented calligrapher and can customize invitations, menus, posters, business cards, & more.

SPEWKY – He is a skilled cabinet maker & wood worker: he recently helped design and build customized cabinets for SKETCH.

He plays in the band 'The Freckled Arm' and can teach basic guitar lessons.

Please contact Heather @ 416 516 1559 x27 to connect with any of these people.

Random Acts of Kindness

Geoff, Anthony and Emily of Holy Trinity High School and Toskan Foundation Youth Philanthropy Initiative program: these high school students did a presentation on SKETCH and won \$5,000 in the competition for us.

Michael and Tara MacTavish from Winnipeg and the CP Rail Employee Giving Program. Michael and Tara are long time monthly donors of SKETCH, and CP has a program that matches up to \$1,000 of employee charitable gifts. To find out more about setting up a similar program in your company call 416-516-5428 and ask for Rudy.

Detective Staff Sergeant Tom Girling of the OPP for his purchase of artwork and obvious excitement about SKETCH.

Pricewaterhouse Coopers for their financial contribution and consistent volunteer help.

Lindt & Sprüngli for purchasing artwork for their downtown offices, for inviting us to present about SKETCH with their Community Outreach Committee, and, of course, for the chocolate.

The Steeles Family for funding and facilitating the Longboard project.

Sky's the Limit for computers for our studio and participants in education.

Eric Walters and Penguin Canada for funding a photography project last year to create a cover for Eric Walter's book *SKETCHES*, and for hosting the book launch here in our Studio on April 25th.

Guy Poulin and Type A Print for the free and/or deeply discounted printing extravaganzas.

Frank Horvat for hosting an upcoming benefit concert for SKETCH (we'll keep you posted).

And many more...

THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH!

VOLUNTEERS: We love you

Over the 2006 and 2007 school year SKETCH hosted 7 placement students; Sarah Aranha, Tova Berle, Michael Cinovskis, Julia Del Rossi, Julia Shymanski, Karen Stern, and Elizabeth Thacker. Besides just being a great group of

people, these folks contributed nearly 1200 human hours to SKETCH. THANK YOU FOR ALL THE HELP.

And thanks to Amy Campbell for designing this newsletter and all of the other help. What would we do without you?

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